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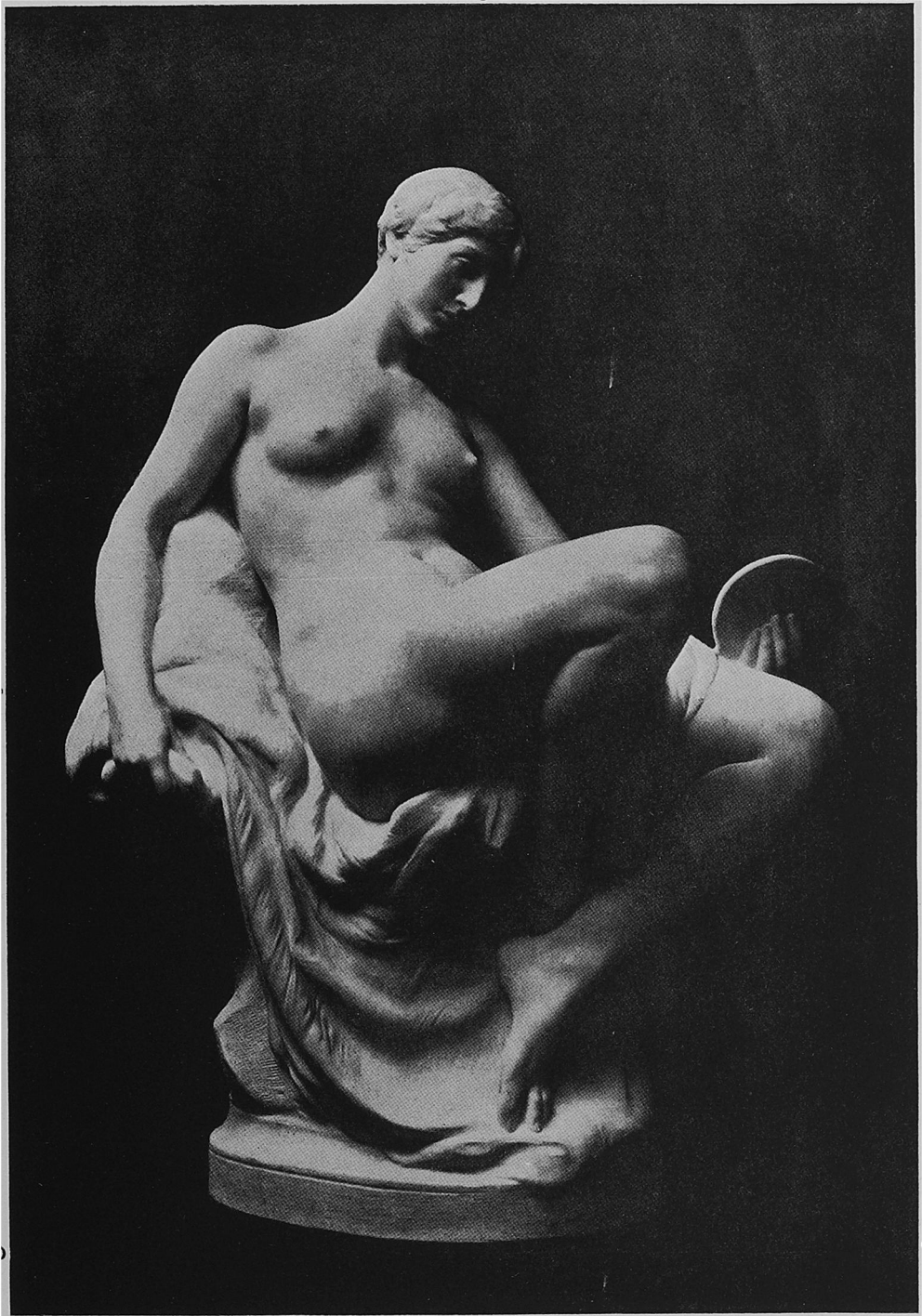
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"MEMORY"

Daniel Chester French Sc.

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AN ENDURING "MEMORY"

The figure of "Memory," by Daniel Chester French, recently purchased by Mr. Henry Walters and presented to the Metropolitan Museum, is one of the finest examples of idealized sculpture exhibited in recent years in New York. It is a striking and beautiful piece, both from the standpoint of imaginative expression and the splendid technical treatment of the stone.—EDITOR.

MOST of the sculpture out of contemporary studios has something abrupt and violent about it. It is highly seasoned with archaic patterns or tossed with startling rapidity out of the newest mould of modern expression or, fathered by war, it is fashioned in a realism that is too much of the moment to get any but small attention from eyes always watching for eternal things. These symptoms of change are not an unmixed evil; an unchanging art would carry its own penalty of monotony. Yet in the midst of these the cool beauty of the work of Daniel Chester French, even its austerity, exercises the charm that what is classic in imagination and mode always enforces in a time of artistic unrest and the annihilation of creative standards. His art has a repose that comes not merely of a tried craftsmanship, but also of an imagination which is sustained and certain in its processes.

"Memory," which is now at the Metropolitan Museum, has traces of this ideal quality which younger sculptors seem either careful to avoid or unable to

capture. The nude and the mirror is not an uncommon theme among portrait painters, chiefly for a disclosure of virtuosity in the handling of flesh tones or ingenuity in composition. In the hands of the sculptor it passes over into an entirely different realm, not only in purpose and effect, but it also takes on a difficulty for adequate representation that the painter never encounters. To dispose of the three-dimensional human body successfully, with flexibility and ease in its purely mechanical aspects and with beauty in the design will test the artist as can no similar problem of mere surfaces. Here the sculptor has achieved finely and satisfyingly.

To hold the artist fast to the symbolism of his work would be to imprison and destroy its charm. The feeling he has put into it may not be entirely impersonal; no artist's can be. But the work is no longer a nude and a mirror; it gives living form to the strange power man has to recreate the past for himself. What is gone does not die. It lives in the soul where at any moment it may be caught in the mirror of memory and flashed into reality again.